

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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51

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 NSC-10 L-03 EB-11

COME-00 OPIC-12 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SEC-03 AID-20 LS-01

DRC-01 /137 W

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P 181805Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7444

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 7640

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BDIS, EMIN, EIND, PE

SUBJ: PRESIDENT VELASCO'S PRESS STATEMENTS OCTOBER 17 RE CERRO

REF: LIMA 7440, LIMA 7350, LIMA 7171

1. SUMMARY: IN PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 17, PRESIDENT VELASCO STATED CERRO WILL BE PERUVIAN BUT SAID THAT U.S.-PERUVIAN DISCUSSIONS THROUGH BILATERAL TEAM (I.E. GREENE MISSION) PRESENTLY UNDER WAY AND IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT TAKE STEP (TO SEIZE CERRO) WHILE VARIOUS QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL CONCERN BEING STUDIED. REPORTERS PRESENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE INFORM US THAT VELASCO ACUTALLY SAID: "CERRO WILL BE PERUVIAN. IT'S A MATTER OF DAYS", HOWEVER, OFFICIAL VERSION READS: "CERRO WILL BE PERUVIAN. IT'S A MATTER OF CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE MOMENT." FORMER VERSION CARRIED IN SOME LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND PRESUMABLY BY WIRE SERVICES. VELASCO'S RESPONSE REITERATED POINT MADE PUBLICLY BY GEN. GRAHAM OCTOBER 9 (LIMA 7440) THAT CERRO WILL BE PERUVIAN AND IS CLEAREST PUBLIC STATEMENT BY ANY GOP FIGURE THAT IT DOES NOT WANT CERRO ISSUE TO JEOPARDIZE BILATERAL EFFORTS RESOLVE INVESTMENT DISPUTES.
END SUMMARY.

2. TEXT OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT CERRO EXCHANGE FOLLOWS:

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BEGIN TEXT

QUESTION. MR. PRESIDENT, SEVERAL WEEKS HAVE PASSED SINCE CERRO WITHDREW ABRUPTLY FROM THE NEGOTIATION TABLE. COULD YOU TELL US IF GOP HAS REACHED A SOLUTION (TO THIS PROBLEM)?

ANSWER: AS YOU ARE AWARE, CERRO TRIED TO SLIP A FAST ONE OVER ON US. THEY PROVOKED US SO THAT WE WOULD REACT WITH IMMEDIATE FORCE. BUT FIVE YEARS OF MAKING REVOLUTION HAVE GIVEN US SOME EXPERIENCE. RETURNING TO YOUR QUESTION, I REPEAT HERE WHAT SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE GOP HAVE SAID. CERRO WILL BE PERUVIAN. IT IS A QUESTION OF CHOOSING THE RIGHT MOMENT. AT THE PRESENT TIME, TWO WORKING GROUPS, ONE PERUVIAN AND ONE AMERICAN, HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL CONCERN WHICH BEGAN FAR BEFORE CERRO'S ACTION AND IT WOULD NOT BE PRUDENT TO TAKE THIS STEP EVEN AS THESE VARIOUS QUESTIONS ARE STILL BEING STUDIED (ACUALMENTE, DOS EQUIPOS DE TRAJABO, UNO PERUANO Y OTRO NORTEAMERICANO, ESTAN CONVERSANDO ACERCA DE PROBLEMAS COMUNES, DESDE MUCHO ANTES QUE CERRO PLANTEARA ESTE INCIDENTE Y NO SERIA PRUDENTE DAR ESE PASO CUANDO AUN SE ANALIZAN DIVERSAS CUESTIONES).

END TEXT

BELCHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, FOREIGN INVESTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LIMA07640
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS BELCHER
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LIMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731025/aaaaarvk.tel
Line Count: 82
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LIMA 7440, LIMA 7350, LIMA 7171
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESIDENT VELASCO'S PRESS STATEMENTS OCTOBER 17 RE CERRO
TAGS: PFOR, BDIS, EMIN, EIND, PE, CERRO DE PASCO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005